

ANG

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## *Editorial*

# Oppose the anti-people maneuvers of the reactionaries

**T**he treachery and the collusion of the various factions of the ruling class are without bounds as they jockey and compete for political power and the chance to plunder the people. As they preoccupy themselves with their filthy games in reactionary politics, the entire country witnesses how they circumvent and twist reactionary laws to advance their own narrow interests. The people already have a glimpse of just how dirty and violent the 2004 election will be, if it takes place at all.

The current burning issue regarding the impeachment of Supreme Court chief justice Hilario Davide Jr. is just a manifestation of the more intense jockeying, infighting and collusion among the various factions of the ruling class. Whatever the merits of the case Davide faces, behind it one can clearly see that the groups that are at loggerheads over the chief justice represent huge political and economic interests.

Foremost among those who schemed to file a case against Davide is Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. who has played kingmaker and principal crony of previous presidents. Now at stake are the preservation and expansion of

his empire and his power in reactionary politics.

Cojuangco wants to ensure the reversal of the Supreme Court decision on the public nature of the coco levy funds which he has long coveted, and consequently pave the way for his control of 27% of United Coconut Planters Bank stocks in San Miguel Corporation (SMC) which he bought using these funds. He has already secured a reversal from the



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Sandiganbayan of the Presidential Commission on Good Government's sequestration in 1986 of 20% of SMC stocks he has likewise long been claiming.

This is also a show of force by Cojuangco for the 2004 election. He was able to garner a sufficient number from among his minions in Congress to sign the impeachment complaint against Davide, achieving this with Arroyo's cooperation. Arroyo took a supposedly neutral stance, claiming that the presidency is a "middle ground". It is her greed for the financial and political support promised by Cojuangco for 2004 that has prevailed even as Cojuangco has not yet even uttered a word regarding the possibility of his own candidacy or support for a candidate of the opposition. Arroyo continues to go along with Cojuangco's dirty schemes. On the other hand, such machinations by Cojuangco have merely underscored and worsened Arroyo's weakness.

This early, all this jockeying has led to serious rifts in the ruling system. Opposing camps are fighting to acquire the privilege and opportunity to become the principal puppet of imperialism and par-

take in plundering and depleting the nation's coffers, intensifying the people's exploitation and oppression and exacting maximum profit from it all. The conflicts will surely intensify as the reactionary election draws closer.

Conditions are most favorable for the progressive and democratic forces to take advantage of. The Davide impeachment case further brings to the fore the rampant corruption in the reactionary government they are all fighting tooth and nail over and the avarice of both the Arroyo ruling clique and the camp of the big bourgeois-comprador Cojuangco. The people have no one to choose from save them and their surrogates. It has become ever clearer that reactionary elections are inutile as a means of purging the rottenness that cuts into the very core of the existing system.

It is particularly infuriating how Arroyo and Cojuangco have schemed and conspired to deny

millions of poor coconut farmers ownership to the funds that for years were exacted from and must be returned to them. It is important for the poor coconut farmers, workers in Cojuangco's enterprises and people in various sectors to mobilize and denounce Gloria and Danding's machinations and demand the return of the coco levy fund to its rightful owners.

## **It has become ever clearer that reactionary elections are inutile as a means of purging the rottenness that cuts into the very core of the existing system.**

We must use all means and opportunities to inform the broad masses of the people about the worst cases of corruption, the schemes and conspiracies against the people's interests and explain matters to them. Not only should we tell them about cases that are now being uncovered but also those that have long been exposed and have not been meted justice. More cases will be exposed in the process.

We must be creative in mobilizing the broadest number of people for various forms of mass actions against corruption and the schemes of the biggest reactionaries. Aside from the toiling masses, youth and students, it is important to win over church organizations and people, small businessmen, teachers and government employees, and even the positive elements in the AFP and include them in the united front.

In the process of exposing and criticizing the maneuvers, dirty tactics and collusion of big reactionaries against the people, we will be able to show that the ruling government and system are rotten, reactionary and antipeople to the core, and why it is necessary to overthrow it and replace it with a government and system that are unsullied, revolutionary and for the masses.



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# US government has negative assessment of Philippine economy

Just three days after US President George W. Bush visited the Philippines, the US State Department issued a negative assessment of the Philippine economy. It is indicative of the depth of the economic crisis that even US imperialism could not deny its existence despite the superficiality of its analysis of the crisis. It also indicates the US' desire to push the further liberalization of the economy.

According to the *Philippine Economic Outlook* which the US embassy regularly issues every semester, prospects of significant economic growth in 2004 are dim.

Aside from the government's fiscal weakness and its heavy debt burden, the report says that potential foreign investors, tourists and others continue to remain concerned about the high crime rate, inadequate infrastructure and corruption. Macapagal-Arroyo is said to have likewise done little to alleviate poverty or fight corruption.

Aside from the coup d'état in July, among the factors that have produced an air of uncertainty and

overshadowed whatever "progress" the economy has attained are the corruption cases against First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

Nonetheless, these reasons are quite superficial and fail to point to the biggest factor behind the crisis—US imperialism's continued exploitation of the Philippines' backward economy, which has condemned the country to a state of permanent crisis.

No less than the data contained in the report state that zero economic growth is expected in 2004 because the P864.8 billion national budget, which represents a 6.6%

increase will be offset both by a 4-5% inflation rate and a 2.36% population growth.

This has the Arroyo regime extremely distraught since increasing the budget would only swell the deficit which has already come to P29.1 billion for the month of September, the highest since March. Government expenses for August and September exceeded the target by about P10 billion each month.

As expected, the Arroyo regime protested the US embassy's assessment, causing the US to withdraw its report after two days and issue a revised document. The new version of the *Philippine Economic Outlook* reduced the negative conclusions of the first document. But with the same data presented, the basis for the first assessment remains.

Meanwhile, in a separate report, the US and the AFP declared the AFP's inability to fight the country's "internal security threats" effectively. According to the Joint Defense Assessment made by the US Pacific Command and the AFP, the latter has a limited capacity to launch timely and effective military operations. It called the AFP organization "disjointed and dysfunctional."

Brandishing this report, the puppet Arroyo regime immediately recommended the resumption in Sulu of the aborted Balikatan 03-1. The military training exercise was withdrawn earlier this year because of massive protests against the US' insistence on having American soldiers accompany AFP combat operations. US imperialism is also using this as a pretext to provide more military aid to the Philippines. **AB**





# NPA seizes 38 firearms in tactical offensives

The New People's Army seized 38 firearms of various caliber in a series of tactical offensives in the last week of October. Twelve enemy forces were killed and at least three were wounded.

**In Northern Samar.** Ten high-powered rifles and nine pistols were added to the NPA's arsenal when Red fighters assaulted the police station in the town of Gamay on October 24.

Riding eight passenger jeeps, the Red fighters attacked the municipality of Gamay, in the northeastern part of the province, at around 6:30 in the morning. As the NPA assault forces exchanged fire with four policemen in the headquarters, other guerrillas entered the houses of two policemen near the municipal building.

One policeman was wounded. The Red fighters sustained no casualties.

**In Isabela.** Seven troops of the combined forces of the 53rd Reconnaissance Company (RC) and the 45th IB were killed when they were ambushed while crossing the river in Sitio Kurawitan, Barangay Binatug, San Mariano on the morning of October 25.

In a statement, Fortunato Camus Command (NPA Northeastern Luzon) spokesperson Victor Servidores said that at least seven soldiers were also wounded in the

ambush that lasted about five hours. Contrary to a statement by the 5th ID that six guerrillas were slain, there were no casualties on the side of the NPA.

**In Bulacan.** Three policemen were killed and ten firearms confiscated in a victorious NPA raid on a detachment of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Maritime Command in Barangay Poblacion, Hagonoy, Bulacan on the night of October 30.

After alighting from the van they had ridden, the Red fighters quickly entered the detachment, which is near the municipal police station. Three policemen were killed and another one wounded after a 10-minute exchange of fire. The NPA withdrew riding two motorized dugout canoes (*bangka*) docked by the river behind the detachment.

The NPA confiscated eight M16s, a .45 and a .38. According to the Guerrilla Front Committee in Western Bulacan-Pampanga, the PNP Maritime Command was meted punishment because it protected big capitalist fishers and extorted from small fishermen.

**In Zamboanga del Sur.** Two CAFGU elements were slain and a sergeant was wounded when Red fighters attacked the 51st IB detachment in Barangay Fatima, San Miguel at dawn of October 27. The NPA first burned down the camp before retreating and bringing with them the three high-powered rifles they confiscated.

**In Tarlac.** Fighters of the NPA Nelson Mesina Command seized an M16, an M14, a 9 mm and a .38 when they attacked the PNP detachment in Barangay Lubigan, San Jose town on October 26. The guerrillas came in riding three dump trucks commandeered from the Provincial Engineers' Office. **AB**





## Protests rock Hacienda Luisita

Over 300 farm workers from Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac have been picketing in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City since October 28 to demand the scrapping of the stock distribution option (SDO) under the non-land transfer scheme of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP). The mass action is led by the Alyansa ng mga Manggagawang-Bukid sa Hacienda Luisita (AMBALA).

The SDO is a scheme cooked up by the Aquino regime in 1987. Pres. Corazon Cojuangco Aquino's objective was to exempt the 6,453-hectare Hacienda Luisita owned by her family from land distribution under the CARP. Instead of land, corporate stocks were distributed to the farm workers who were deceptively regarded as co-owners of the hacienda.

Through further maneuvers, the SDO merely strengthened the Cojuangcos' monopoly and control over large tracts of land which had long been tilled by the farm work-

ers' forebears. AMBALA chair Ben Pampoza said the agreement provides for P118 million in the hacienda's shares of stocks to be given to the beneficiaries each year for a period of 30 years. However, he said, the amount represents only 33.29% of Hacienda Luisita, Inc.'s (HLI) total worth. This means that the Cojuangcos still hold 66.7% of the stocks and have absolute control of the corporate farm. The 33.29% of the stocks supposedly set aside for the farm workers is equivalent to a mere 1,633 hectares out of the

hacienda's total 6,431 hectares.

Aside from this, the dividends distributed to the farm workers are based on the number of days they worked and not on the corporation's total profits. Based on this calculation, the oppressed and exploited farm workers receive only P200 each year.

Last month, AMBALA, regular workers and supervisors of Central Azucarera de Tarlac (CAT) as well as farm workers boycotted the election for the representatives to HLI's board of directors.

Because of the boycott, only 15.77% of the 6,296 farm workers' 55,418 million shares were represented in the voting. Pampoza said the election results reflected the sentiments of the hacienda's farm workers. The Cojuangco family wallows in luxury, he said, while families of farm workers suffer extreme poverty.

Aside from HLI and CAT, among the companies from which the Cojuangcos earn millions of pesos are Tarlac Development Corp., Jose Cojuangco & Sons, Inc., Luisita Marketing Corp. and the Tarlac Distillery Corp.

The hacienda that former president Aquino vaunted as a model of her CARP has instead epitomized the landlords' rampant and shameless indulgence on land that should benefit the farm workers. It is but right for Hacienda Luisita's farm workers to fortify their ranks to further advance their struggle for genuine land reform. AB



# Daba-Daba blazes in Panay

**A**mong the Party's principal stresses in propaganda work in Panay is the efficient and mass reproduction and distribution of *Ang Bayan* (*AB*) as the Party's newspaper and *Daba-Daba* ("blaze" in Hiligaynon) as the revolutionary mass newspaper in the island.

First published as the revolutionary mass newspaper in Northern Panay in February 1977, *Daba-Daba* became the regional paper in June 1981. Since then, *Daba-Daba* has deeply rooted itself among the island's masses as the publication that banners the revolutionary movement's stand and calls on many issues.

The masses fully supported *Daba-Daba*. Their contributions for the publication were ready each time their copy arrived. It had become the leading source of news and information about current events as well as national and regional issues and developments in the revolutionary movement in the cities and the countryside.

At the same time, *AB* was continuously translated, reproduced and circulated in the region.

Due to the influence of the erroneous line in the 1980s, *Daba-Daba* began to come out less frequently until it stopped publication altogether in 1987. It was published once more in February 1998 owing to the Party's Second Great Rectification Movement.

*Daba-Daba* began to be published quarterly with 12 to 16 pages. It also released four to six page-special issues containing analyses and calls on burning issues.

This year, in accordance with the directive of the Party's national leadership regarding *AB*'s more frequent release, the regional Party leadership decided to prioritize

*AB*'s reproduction and distribution as the main publication distributed in the region.

The region likewise decided that *Daba-Daba* be released as *AB*'s regional section, reporting the revolutionary movement's calls and stand on local issues. It also publishes news about the mass movement in the cities and countryside of Panay not covered by *AB*'s reporting.

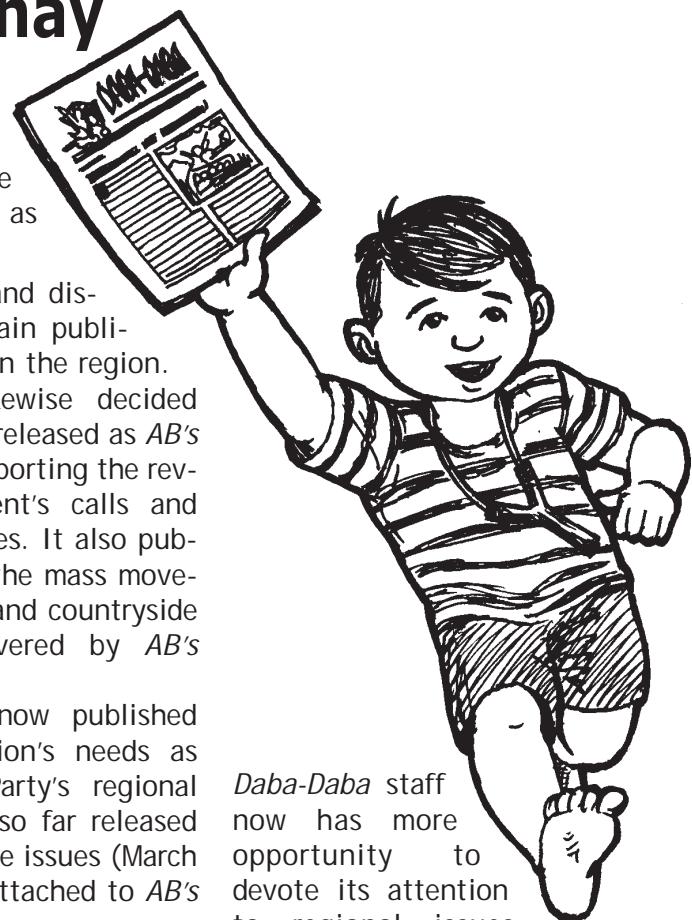
*Daba-Daba* is now published based on the region's needs as decided by the Party's regional leadership. It has so far released two five- to six-page issues (March 7 and August 21) attached to *AB*'s regular issue.

*Daba-Daba* also releases special issues from time to time even as it looks forward to coming out separately from *AB* when this becomes necessary and it has already developed the capability to do so.

*Daba-Daba* maintains its masthead to give it a distinct identity as a regional mass newspaper.

The "Caduy" comic strip, a regular section of *Daba-Daba* that is popular with the readership has also been maintained. "Caduy" is a popular nickname for young boys in Antique.

With this arrangement, the revolutionary movement is able to consolidate, streamline and maximize its machinery, resources and means to reproduce and distribute Party publications as well as the regional mass newspaper. The



*Daba-Daba* staff now has more opportunity to devote its attention to regional issues.

Based on the regional situation, it can particularize the analysis of national issues which come out of *AB*'s pages.

The efforts of *AB* editors in tackling regional issues and news through correspondence reports have also been helpful.

There are still problems and issues that need to be attended to. One of them is publishing *Daba-Daba* more frequently to respond to the growing pace of revolutionary work and the enemy's intensifying counterrevolutionary propaganda in the region.

There is also need for tighter coordination between the *AB* and *Daba-Daba* editorial staffs and to pay particular attention to the content of both newspapers, especially regarding news from the region.

AB



# Iraqi guerrilla attacks on US forces intensifying

The Iraqi people have raised their level of resistance even as the US continues to find it difficult getting significant multilateral support for its occupation of Iraq. On the 2nd of November, 16 American troops were killed when a surface-to-air missile downed their Chinook helicopter in Albu-Isa village in the town of Baisa in Fallujah, Iraq. Three more Americans (a soldier and two civilian contractors of the US Army Engineering Corps) were killed that same morning in Baghdad when a bomb was detonated under their vehicle.

American troops who came to the rescue witnessed the people rejoicing over the downed helicopter and the death of the soldiers aboard. "American pigs!" they shouted at the slain foreign troops.

It was the second most severe attack against US-led occupation forces since they invaded Iraq. A

hundred and thirty-nine American soldiers have been killed since the US declared the end of hostilities. An average of two coffins are sent home to the US each day.

Earlier, up to 43 soldiers were killed and over 200 wounded in a series of bombings by guerrilla forces against coalition forces and

their puppets on October 27. Within a span of 45 minutes, five bombs were detonated in succession in Baghdad and Fallujah, destroying the offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross and four police stations.

The bombings took place a day after rockets were rained on the Rashid Hotel where US Deputy Defense Sec. Paul Wolfowitz was staying. Although he was not injured in the attacks, a high-ranking US military official was killed.

These recent attacks indicate the rising capability and level of coordination of the Iraqi forces fighting the occupation.

On the other hand, aside from the \$87.5 billion budget approved by the US Senate to sustain US occupation troops in Afghanistan and Iraq, the US has been unable to obtain meaningful support, especially from France and Germany. The US-organized conference in Madrid, Spain on October 24 to garner financial support for the "reconstruction of Iraq" was a failure.

Opposition to the occupation is gaining strength not only overseas but in the US itself. On October 25, over 100,000 people launched protest actions in Washington DC. It was the largest demonstration against the US' war since Bush declared the major confrontation in Iraq over. The protesters hailed from over 145 cities, and included 800 families of American soldiers deployed in the Middle East. Meanwhile, 25,000 people marched in the city square in front of the San Francisco City Hall in California.

These protest actions were led by International ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism) and United for Peace and Justice coalitions.



## Lumads demand end to government's war in Mindanao

LUMADS called on the Arroyo government to stop its war in Mindanao. This year alone, about 80,000 lumads have been victimized by the war. The lumads aired their demands in a forum in Kidapawan City at the close of the observance of Tribal Filipino Month in the last week of October.

Over 20 people's organiza-

tions participated in the activity. They assailed the government for turning a deaf ear to their demands.

According to Minda Acat, a lumad leader, they are the main victims of the "war against terrorism" in Mindanao. Large numbers of lumads have lost their homes, farms and crops.

## GABRIELA marches against Arroyo's plan in 2004

HUNDREDS of members of GABRIELA launched a National Women's Day of Protest on October 28. Women from the ranks of workers, peasants, youth and other sectors marched from Mabuhay Rotonda to Mendiola to express their opposition to Pres.

Gloria Arroyo's bid to stay in power beyond 2004.

Prior to this, GABRIELA held its 9th congress and celebrated the organization's 20th anniversary. It also honored courageous women who fought the Marcos dictatorship.

## 7 die in cholera epidemic in Tondo

SEVEN residents of Tondo, Manila have died and 576 have been hospitalized due to a cholera epidemic that has ravaged 11 barangays in the area since October 23.

The Maynilad Water Services, Inc. and the government of Manila are now washing their hands of any responsibility over the appalling

water services that triggered the epidemic. In spite of high water bills charged the consumers, old and leaking water pipes highly susceptible to bacterial and viral contamination are common. The environment is also polluted because of the heaps of garbage that the local government fails to dispose of.

## VFA Commission official sacked

PRES. Gloria Arroyo recently sacked Usec. Amado Valdez, executive director of the Presidential Commission on the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), because he continued to assert the imposition of disciplinary action on three drunk-

en American soldiers involved in a traffic accident in Zamboanga City in September.

Valdez stated this to reporters on October 28. Another reason was his stand for the country's rights in the implementation of the VFA.

## Bush's visit to Asia reaps protests

CONTRARY to his plan to garner total support for his "war against terrorism," Pres. George W. Bush reaped vehement protests during his whirlwind tour of six countries in Asia.

**Thailand.** Just as what happened during his visits to Japan and the Philippines, Thai activists assailed Bush as he attended the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit on October 19-21 in Bangkok, the country's capital. About 1,000 people marched in the streets to demonstrate their opposition to globalization and the occupation of Afghanistan and Iraq by American forces. Mean-while, police prevented 3,000 demonstrators from the provinces from entering Bangkok.

**Indonesia.** Hundreds of members of KAMMI or the Indonesian Muslim Students Action Front held a rally outside the US Embassy in Jakarta on the eve of Bush's visit to the country on October 21. They burned portraits and effigies of Bush and American flags. Protest actions also took place in the towns of Yogyakarta, Bali, Jember, Palembang, Makassar, Sola and Semarang.

**Australia.** Bush's speech before parliament was disrupted twice when Sen. Kerry Nettle and another member of parliament heckled him with slogans against the US war on Iraq. Meanwhile, police were unable to prevent about 2,000 people from launching protests outside parliament.